AP US History

Chapter 15 Questions

1. At the conclusion of the Civil War what was in need of reconstruction and/or construction (both literally and figuratively)?

Literally, a majority of the Southern states needed construction. During the war, the North had destroyed cities, devastated and burned crops, and the battlegrounds were often torn apart. So there was need for a lot of building and support for the liberated slaves and the widows; white/black southerners. Next figuratively, the South had needed to change their way of life. The South had lost the war, so slavery was abolished (it already was, but it didn’t really happen), so they had to find other ways to run their economic systems. For example, there was a substantial amount of industries popping up around the South. Another example was the introduction of the crop-lien system, instead of the old slavery system they had before. Since the South was devastated, white Southerners and black Southerners had very little means of money, food, and property, so various groups, like the Freedman’s Bureau was established.

1. How did the structure of the U.S. government affect Reconstruction (meaning the ways the different branches operate and interact, separation of powers, etc.)?

Congress and the President had a fair amount of conflict between them, Congress had tried to make numerous laws that provided civil rights of all blacks through the 14th and 15th Amendments. For example, Congress had made laws that made African Americans, but the President had tried to veto them, but Congress had overrided his veto. Congress had even tried to impeach the President several times, before finally giving up. This had made Reconstruction a little less effective than they had wanted and that it stalled Reconstruction for a time. The Supreme Court had not done much until after Reconstruction where they had stripped the 14th and 15th Amendments of their power. For example, in *Plessey* v.  *Ferguson*, the Supreme Court had allowed segregation as long as equality was kept, but that had weakened black power.

1. Why did Reconstruction end and what were the results of the abandonment of the reconstruction plans?

Reconstruction began to end as the North grew increasingly preoccupied with its own political and economic problems; interest in Reconstruction faded. For example, the Panic of 1873 had caused Northern industrialists and their partners to find out the cause of it, which meant that they were not focusing on Reconstruction. It was also because of the Radical Republicans, some felt that they had done all they could, some joined the Liberals and helped finish Reconstruction. The Reconstruction ended with the Compromise of 1877, the release of the federal troops signaled that the North is going to do nothing about Reconstruction. The results was the birth of the “New South”. They had created laws to counter the ones that gave black people very little power; basically loopholes in the 14th and 15th Amendments. Laws were not enforced after the federal forces had left. The state governments had not enforced those laws, because they detested them. The industrialization of the South had occurred, factories were popping up, railroads were constructed, however the South had still remained primarily agrarian. Finally the racism towards black had appeared, white Southerners had done everything to stop them from equality, no power; they even perform lynchings. Old ways have not changed such as the hierarchy of the South and the plantation system has not changed too much. New tactics were enforced, such as intimidation and violence towards African Americans.